

Appl. No. 10/734,843
Amdt. dated November 7, 2006
Reply to Office Action of August 15, 2006

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Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 74 with the following amended paragraph:

– Alternatively, the stretchable material 10 can be formed from two outer layers with a plurality of elastic strands sandwiched therebetween. The elastic strands can be formed from LYCRA[[®]]. LYCRA[[®]] is a registered trademark of E. I. Du Pont De Nemours & Co., having an office at 1007 Market Street, Wilmington, Delaware 19898. The elastic strands can be aligned approximately parallel to one another or be angled or skewed relative to one another. The elastic strands can also be uniformly or randomly spaced apart from one another. The elastic strands can vary in shape, size, configuration, and/or length. The diameter and/or cross-sectional configuration of the elastic strands, the decitex (weight in grams per 10,000 meters of a strand) of the elastic strands, and the tension imparted into the elastic strands can all be varied to suit one's particular product needs. The elastic strands can have a round, semi-circular, square, rectangular, oval or some other geometrical configuration. The elastic strands can overlap, intersect or crisscross at least one other elastic strand. The various ways of positioning, orienting, and adhering the elastic strands to the two outer layers are well known to those skilled in the art. –

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 5 with the following amended paragraph:

– In Fig. 2, the absorbent article 18 is shown as it would appear just prior to being pulled up around a user's torso. In Figs. 3 and 4, the absorbent article 18 is depicted in an open position solely for the purpose of better showing the various components. In Figs. 3 and 4, the open pant-like absorbent article 18 has a transverse central axis X--X that corresponds with the longitudinal centerline X--X shown in Fig. 1. The absorbent article 18 also has a longitudinal central axis Y--Y, and a vertical central axis Z--Z. –

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 34 with the following amended paragraph:

– The elastic band 44 can extend outward, in the Y--Y direction, from the front panel 20 a distance of from between 1 millimeter (mm) to a distance equal to about 75% of the width (w) of the elastic band 44. Desirably, the elastic band 44 extends outward from the front panel 20 by a distance that ranges from between about 2 mm to about 75 millimetersmm. More desirably, the elastic band 44 extends outward from the front panel 20 by a distance that ranges from between about 3 mm to about 50 mm. Most desirably, the elastic band 44 extends outward from the front panel 20 by a distance of at least about 10 millimetersmm. –

Appl. No. 10/734,843

Amdt. dated November 7, 2006

Reply to Office Action of August 16, 2006

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 18 with the following amended paragraph:

-- The elastic band 46 can extend outward, in the Y--Y direction, from the back panel 32 a distance of from between about 1 millimeter (mm) to a distance equal to about 75% of the width (w₁) of the elastic band 46. Desirably, the elastic band 46 extends outward from the back panel 32 by a distance that ranges from between about 2 mm to about 75 ~~millimeters~~mm. More desirably, the elastic band 46 extends outward from the back panel 32 by a distance that ranges from between about 3 mm to about 50 mm. Most desirably, the elastic band 46 extends outward from the back panel 32 by a distance of at least about 10 ~~millimeters~~mm. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 10 with the following amended paragraph:

-- Alternatively, the elastic bands 44 and 46 could be an elastic nonwoven or an elastic laminate. For example, the elastic bands 44 and 46 could be an elastic nonwoven like meltblown or spunbond urethane. The elastic bands 44 and 46 could also be formed from a material containing a surface treatment like KRATON^[(®)]. KRATON^[(®)] is a registered trademark of E. I. Du Pont De Nemours & Company having an office at 1007 Market Street, Wilmington, Delaware 19898. Furthermore, the elastic bands 44 and 46 could be a stretch bonded laminate, a neck bonded laminate, or any other elastic laminate known to those skilled in the art. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 18 with the following amended paragraph:

-- The elastic strands 102 can be formed from LYCRA^[(®)] or KRAYTON^[(®)]. LYCRA^[(®)] and KRAYTON^[(®)] are registered trademarks of E. I. Du Pont De Nemours & Company having an office at 1007 Market Street, Wilmington, Delaware 19898. The elastic strands 102 can also be formed from natural rubber or from an elastomeric material, such as a meltblown elastomer. Other elastic materials known to those skilled in the art can also be used. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 17 with the following amended paragraph:

-- Still referring to Fig. 4, the attachments 122 and 124 can be by various means and can include permanent attachments as well as removable or releasable attachments. Desirably, the attachments 122 and 124 are permanent attachments where they are not designed to be removed without destroying the bond. The attachments 122 and 124 can be formed by using glue, adhesive, ultrasonic bonds, thermal bonds, heat bonds, pressure bonds, heat and pressure bonds, or any other attachment mechanism known to those skilled in the art. The attachments 122 and 124 can also include a mechanical fastener, such as by sewing with thread, using buttons and button holes, using snaps, by employing hook and loop fasteners, etc. A hook and loop fastener is generally considered a releasable attachment. One type of hook and loop fastener is VELCRO^[(®)] wherein a hook material is releasably engaged into a loop material. VELCRO^[(®)] is

Appl. No. 10/734,843

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a registered trademark of Velcro USA, Inc. having an office at 406 Brown Avenue, Manchester, New Hampshire 03103. —

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 17, line 23 with the following amended paragraph:

— It should be noted that a plurality of the absorbent articles 18 can be grouped and packaged for distribution and sale to retailers, who in turn, will sell the absorbent articles 18 to the ultimate customer. The packaging step is depicted as box 150. Various numbers of absorbent articles 18 can be packaged together. For example, a travel package may contain as few as 1 to 3 absorbent articles 18, while an economy package may contain over 100 absorbent articles 18. Today, many manufacturers create a plurality of packages each containing various numbers of absorbent articles 18. —